(b) As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) there has been reduction in ADC per minute rates which has become possible as a result of subscriber growth especially in Mobile segment and resultant increases in the minutes that fund the ADC.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of above.

Benefits to an average MTNL subscriber

344. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite increase in the profits of MTNL no improvement have been brought in the phone network for the benefit of average subscriber;

(b) whether it is also a fact that phone call costs, internet connectivity and durations of calls are still deterrent factors for marginal subscribers such as students, pensioners and other fixed income groups; and

(c) whether Government are considering any steps to help such subscribers and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Government's policies in respect of Nepal

345. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, especially from our national security point of view, stability, peace and economic progress of Nepal has been significant;

(b) whether Government have been pursuing appropriate policies in respect of neighbouring countries, particularly, Nepal;

(c) salient features thereof, including of the status of monitoring

various social, economic and political developments in the neighboring countries;

(d) whether Government had any prior feed back about development that took place in Nepal on 1st February, 2005; and

(e) if not, the reasons for this failure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (e) Peace, stability and prosperity in our neighbouring countries is an important objective of our national security and foreign policies. Government of India follows a multi-pronged approach of interaction, engagement and cooperation with all our neighbours, including Nepal, at various levels, in diverse areas for mutual benefit. Close monitoring and evaluation of developments and trends in our neighbourhood is an essential element of policy formulation.

India continues to closely follow the developments in Nepal. Government has consistently articulatd the view that the problems being faced in Nepal should be addressed from a standpoint of national consensus. The role of political parties, representing multi-party democracy, in foreign such a consensus is essential.

Agreement between India and Malaysia

346. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreements were signed between India and Malaysia during the recent visit of Malaysian Prime Minister; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERALAFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Three agreements were signed in the presence of the two Prime Ministers, namely, (a) an agreement pursuant to the Joint Venture agreement dated 15th May 2001 between the ANTRIX Corporation and MEASAT International (South Asia) Ltd. for joint marketing of satellite capacity; (b) a Letter of Intent signed by MEASAT for procurement, launch and putting into orbit of MEASAT 4 satellite from the ANTRIX Corporation; and (c) a Concession Agreement for the development, construction, operation and maintenance of the Hyderabad